

DOCKET ITEM #7-A
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT #93-005

PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1993

ISSUE: Consideration of a request to amend the Alexandria West chapter of the 1992 Master Plan by increasing heights permitted without a CDD special use permit within the Winkler CDD, and to make clarifying changes to several CDD principles for the Winkler tract.

APPLICANT: The Mark Winkler Company
by J. Howard Middleton, Jr. Attorney

LOCATION: The Winkler Tract
Tax Map Nos. 19.00 01 02.02-02.07, 19.00 02 01-09, 20.00 03 01
and 29.00 01 05

ZONING: CDD#4-Coordinated Development District.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, NOVEMBER 4, 1993: On a motion by Mr. Wagner, seconded by Ms. Fossum, the Planning Commission voted to **recommend approval** of the staff recommendation. The motion carried 6-0, with Mr. Ragland absent.

Reason:

The Planning Commission agreed with the staff recommendation.

Speakers:

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the following alternative to the applicant's proposed changes to the Winkler CDD, by adoption of the attached resolution:

[**Bold Underline** indicates new text]

[~~Strike-out~~ indicates deleted text]

Development without a CDD Special Use Permit

Within the designated CDD area, the OC zone regulation shall apply for the existing office area and the existing vacant area, the CG zone regulation shall apply for the shopping center area, and the RA zone shall apply for the existing residential area, with the following additional provisions:

1. the F.A.R. of development does not increase over the existing F.A.R. for the developed portion of the site
2. ~~provided that the F.A.R. does not exceed 1.0 on the vacant portion of the site, and provided that heights do not exceed 50' on any portion of the site~~
3. At least 43 acres shall be maintained in or adjacent to the Botanical Preserve as open space and shall not be used in calculating FAR for development without a CDD SUP.
4. In the area bounded generally by Beauregard Street, Seminary Road, I-395, and Roanoke Avenue buildings may rise to a height of 100 feet except:
 - a. No buildings shall be constructed in the first 50 feet measured from the curb of Beauregard Street. If surface parking is located in this area, it shall be screened by a planting area at least 10 feet deep along Beauregard.
 - b. Buildings along Beauregard may exceed 50 feet in height by one foot for each foot they are set back beyond 50 feet from the curb of Beauregard, up to the maximum 100 feet in height.

Development With a CDD Special Use Permit

Because a significant portion of this district is already developed for residential, with some retail, a hotel and some office, the following principles are proposed to maintain the entire district as a mixed use development:

1. Existing development in the CDD ~~should~~ **shall** be maintained at existing densities and uses; the undeveloped areas should be developed in accord with the following principles.
2. Because of the vast size of the undeveloped areas, overall densities of development in that area ~~should~~ **shall** be limited to a F.A.R. of 1.0. However, in

order to encourage the owner to dedicate an additional ~~20-30~~ **25** acres to **the Winkler Botanical Preserve (to which 18 acres have been dedicated to date)** open space, greater densities ~~should~~ **shall** be allowed on the non-dedicated parcels as long as the total density of the currently undeveloped area (**approximately 104 acres**) does not exceed an F.A.R. of 1.0.

3. ~~An additional 12-22 acres shall be maintained as open space.~~ **Consistent with Principle No. 2, the 43 acres shall be maintained as the Winkler Botanical Preserve.**
4. The remaining undeveloped areas occur on two plateaus and may be developed for office buildings, although mixed use (office, retail, service and residential) is strongly encouraged.
5. The undeveloped plateau at Seminary Road and the Shirley Highway may be developed with office buildings of up to 150 feet in height. Structured parking is encouraged in order to maintain open areas.
6. The undeveloped plateau along Beauregard Street may be developed with office buildings, although mixed use (office, retail, service and residential) is strongly encouraged. Where possible, landscaping ~~should~~ **shall** be maintained along Beauregard Street,. Buildings along Beauregard Street ~~should~~ **shall** be kept low, preferably 50 feet and not to exceed 77 feet. On the part of the site away from Beauregard Street, taller buildings of up to 150 feet are allowed. Any retailing or service center ~~should~~ **shall** be located along Beauregard Street, in the vicinity of the existing commercial center. The southernmost part of the plateau needs to provide a buffer between the commercial buildings and the low scale residential buildings to the south. Points of access to Beauregard Street ~~should~~ **shall** be kept to a minimum; access to the area ~~should~~ **shall** be provided via Nottingham and a new road through the area. Surface parking ~~should~~ **shall** be kept to a minimum in order to maintain the greatest possible open landscaped area.
7. The height limit on this tract will be 150 feet, with consideration given to two buildings of not more than 250 feet each.

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sketch--adjacent land use

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sketch-small area plan

BACKGROUND

The Winkler Tract Coordinated Development District encompasses 278 acres which is partially developed in residential, retail, office and hotel uses. The existing residential development, about 2,300 units, covers 45 percent of the Winkler Tract. Another 17 percent of the tract is developed in the commercial uses, including approximately 100,000 sq.ft. of retail space, 730,000 sq.ft. of office space, and 500 hotel rooms. There are 104 acres on the tract which remain vacant.

These 104 acres are located between the Shirley Highway and Beauregard Street, south of Seminary Road and north of Roanoke Avenue. Of the 104 acres, 18 are now deeded to the Winkler Botanical Preserve for perpetual park use and scientific study.

The CDD zoning for the Winkler Tract maintains the existing levels of development on the developed portion of the tract; if any of the developed portion is redeveloped, densities in that area will not be permitted to increase over the existing levels, even with a special use permit. On the undeveloped portion of the lot, the CDD permits commercial development up to a 1.0 FAR at heights of 50 feet without a CDD special use permit. With a special use permit, the same density of development is permitted, but heights are allowed to rise to 150 feet, with 250 feet for up to two buildings.

Applicant's Proposal

The applicant is requesting a change to the CDD guidelines which would increase the maximum building heights permitted within the CDD without a CDD special use permit from 50' to 100' for the commercial portion of the site (the vacant parcel and the site of the existing office and hotel development), with certain setback requirements along Beauregard Street.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The Winkler Tract is unique among the 10 CDDs in the City because it is the only CDD where the remaining portion of the site is permitted to be developed completely in commercial uses. All commercial development was permitted because 45 percent of the Winkler tract is already developed in residential uses. While in most CDDs in the City, the CDD process is intended to ensure that high density mixed use development is well integrated within the development and with surrounding development, in this CDD the CDD designation serves a somewhat different purpose. The major impetus behind designating this tract as a CDD was to provide

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flexibility in siting buildings in order to maximize the amount of open space preserved on the site while subjecting very tall buildings to public review.

Open space is a key feature of the Winkler development. Currently, 18 acres adjacent to the Shirley Highway, in the center of the vacant portion of the site, have been deeded to the Winkler Botanical Preserve for use as parkland and scientific study. Additional land is currently used by the preserve, and the Winkler Corporation has indicated that its long term goal is to increase the size of the preserve to 43 acres.

Within the Winkler CDD, heights are limited to 50 feet without a CDD special use permit. Reducing the heights permitted without a CDD special use permit provided the major incentive to do CDD development within the Winkler tract, because the development density permitted both with and without a CDD special use permit is 1.0 FAR. In fact, the reduced heights for development without a CDD special use permit were included primarily as an incentive to use the CDD; heights of 100 feet are not inappropriate on this site, except close to Beauregard Street, which currently maintains a low scale of development up to the Raddison Hotel. Heights up to 150 feet, with the possibility for two buildings up to 250 feet, are permitted with a CDD special use permit.

The applicant requests the ability to build taller buildings without having to go through the CDD plan approval process because it believes that the CDD plan would be extremely costly, citing the hundreds of thousands of dollars the applicant has spent on earlier concept plans, and the uncertainty of the near term real estate market which makes it difficult to prepare such a plan. Staff does not believe that it is necessary to expend large sums of money in order to produce a generalized concept plan; detailed analysis is not necessarily required at the concept plan stage, and a concept plan can be prepared easily and inexpensively. Staff does agree, however, that it is difficult to project office demand for the next decade, and that it may be advantageous to the City and to the applicant to have more flexibility to be able to respond quickly to potential purchasers for moderate size office space of 10 stories or less.

The applicant requests a change in the CDD without a special use permit to allow it to build buildings of up to 100 feet solely with approval of a site plan, while maintaining the requirement to file a CDD plan to construct buildings to greater heights. Staff is prepared to recommend approval of that request subject to conditions that will protect the current low scale of Beauregard Street. The applicant's proposal is to set 50' buildings back 80 feet from the centerline of Beauregard Street, which is the setback requirement in the zoning code, and to increase the setback one additional foot for each additional foot in building height, up to the maximum of 100 feet. Under the applicant's formula, a building with a height of 100' would be set back from the centerline of Beauregard Street 130'. Beauregard varies in width, but on a typical four-lane with median segment of Beauregard, under this formula, a 50' building

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would be set back roughly 40' from the curb-line, and a 100' building would be set back about 90' from the curb-line.

Staff supports the increase in heights to 100 feet. Ironically, if development were to proceed under the "development without a SUP" mode, and buildings were to be constructed at 50 feet in height, the ultimate effect would be to actually decrease the amount of open space that can be saved on the site, because buildings would be spread out, covering more of the site, rather than rising vertically. Allowing buildings to rise to 100 feet will help preserve open space on the site.

However, staff recommends a slight increase in the required set-back from the applicant's proposal. Staff also recommends that the setback be measured from curb-line rather than center-line, so that on wider stretches of Beauregard Street buildings are not closer to the street. Staff is recommending that no buildings be permitted within 50 feet of the curb of Beauregard Street; this is roughly the setback of the Winkler office buildings to the west of Beauregard Street. As under the applicant's proposal, buildings would then be permitted to rise one additional foot in height, up to the maximum of 100 feet, for each additional foot they are set back from Beauregard Street. Under the staff proposal, a building of 50 feet would be set back at least 50 feet from Beauregard Street and a building of 100 feet would be set back at least 100 feet. This setback would allow a sizable area within which to allow planting to soften the transition to 100 foot buildings.

In discussions with staff and the neighborhood, the Winkler Corporation has reaffirmed its commitment to ultimately set aside a total of 43 acres on the site for the Botanical Preserve, whether the site is developed with or without a CDD special use permit. The CDD guidelines specifically state that the 1.0 FAR of density permitted to be developed on the site is to be calculated on all of the 104 vacant acres, including the 43 acres of the preserve. The result is a maximum permitted 4.5 million square feet of building. The non-SUP provisions of the CDD did not address the preservation of the 43 acres in open space and the Winkler Corporation has no obligation to put additional land in the preserve if they develop under the non-SUP provisions of the CDD. Technically, all of the 104 acres on the site except the 18 now dedicated to the Preserve could be used for FAR calculations, permitting a maximum 3.7 million square feet of building. However, given the Winkler's commitment to ultimately dedicate the full 43 acres of land to the preserve even if the site is developed without a special use permit, the practical effect is to reduce the amount of floor area that could be built without a CDD special use permit to 2.6 million square feet. Staff has recommended a change to the CDD guidelines for development without a CDD special use permit, in order to clarify and codify that the 43 acres of open space of the Preserve may not be used for the purposes of calculating FAR.

Minor Changes to the CDD guidelines for Development With A CDD Special Use Permit.

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Staff is also recommending minor changes to the text of CDD guideline Nos. 2 and 3, as shown in the staff recommendation. These clarifications were agreed to in 1990 by the Winkler Company, the Civic Associations and Planning staff, but were never implemented in the final adoption of the plan. As the Winkler application notes, these changes do not affect the development rights under the guidelines but make more specific the commitments by the Winkler Company for the development of the site. The changes as proposed specify the exact amount of additional land to be dedicated to the Winkler Botanical Preserve (25 acres) and contain an affirmative agreement to maintain the Preserve.

In addition, staff recommends substituting the word "shall" for "should" in the CDD guidelines to denote that they represent requirements.

STAFF: Sheldon Lynn, Director, Planning and Community Development; Kimberley Johnson, Principal Planner.

Attachments: 1. Draft Resolution
2. MPA #93-005 Application
3. Copy of 1990 letter describing clarifications
to CDD guidelines

RESOLUTION NO. MP-93-0005

WHEREAS, under the Provisions of Section 9.05 of the City Charter, the Planning Commission may adopt amendments to the Master Plan of the City and submit to the City Council such revisions in said plans as changing conditions may make necessary; and

WHEREAS, an application for amendment to the **ALEXANDRIA WEST SMALL AREA PLAN** section of the 1992 Master Plan was filed with the Department of Planning and Community Development in September 1993 for changes in the CDD Principles for the Winkler Tract; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Community Development met with the community on October 20, 1993 to discuss the proposed revision; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Community Development has analyzed the proposed revision and presented its recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed amendment was held on November 4, 1993 with all public testimony and written comment considered; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds that:

1. The proposed amendment is necessary and desirable to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the **ALEXANDRIA WEST** section of the City; and
2. The proposed amendment is generally consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the 1992 Master Plan and with the specific goals and objectives set forth in the **ALEXANDRIA WEST** section of the 1992 Master Plan; and
3. The proposed amendment shows the Commission's long range recommendations for the general development of the **ALEXANDRIA WEST AREA**; and
4. Based on the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which the Commission may properly take notice in making and adopting a master plan for the City of Alexandria, adoption of the amendment to the **ALEXANDRIA WEST** section of the 1992 Master Plan will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of the City;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria that:

1. The following amendment is hereby adopted in its entirety as an amendment to the **ALEXANDRIA WEST** section of the 1992 Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia in accordance with Section 9.05 of the Charter of the City of Alexandria, Virginia:

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2. ~~provided that the F.A.R. does not exceed 1.0 on the vacant portion of the site, and provided that heights do not exceed 50' on any portion of the site~~

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b. Buildings along Beauregard may exceed 50 feet in height by one foot for each foot they are set back beyond 50 feet from the curb of Beauregard, up to the maximum 100 feet in height.

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7. The height limit on this tract will be 150 feet, with consideration given to two buildings of not more than 250 feet each.

2. This resolution shall be signed by the Chairman of the Commission and attested by its secretary, and a true copy of this resolution forwarded and certified to the City Council.

ADOPTED THE 4TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 4, 1993.

William B. Hurd, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Sheldon Lynn, Secretary